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Boost search skills with on-line news archives

E-BIZ

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If you're like most entrepreneurs, you silently curse the World Wide Web every time you try to search for something. But you have little right to complain if you haven't taken the time to learn the most effective methods.

Yet in some cases, regardless of how strong your skills may be, you still can't find what you are looking for, particularly if you use a general search engine such as Altavista.

That's why you should consider learning how to find information in an on-line news archive. There are two types: Web sites that give you access to back issues of magazines or newspapers; and pay-to-use search services.

Some allow you to search their on-line archives free of charge. Use Pathfinder (**www.pathfinder.com**) to search back issues of Fortune and Money, among other publications. Other magazines, such as Business Week and the Economist, restrict searching to subscribers.

In the case of Business Week (**www.businessweek.com**), you can gain access to over seven years of past articles, while the Economist (**www.economist.com**) allows you to search all articles published since 1995. Simply visit either site, provide your subscriber ID from the mailing label to sign up, and you can start your search.

Magazine archives such as these can be a very rich source of information when you are trying to learn more about a particular industry, or when you need to bring yourself up to speed on a new topic.

A number of Web sites contain archives of Canadian content. For example, some Canadian newspaper Web sites allow you to search back issues of that particular publication or a number of affiliates — for free or, in some cases, for a charge.

To search a bunch of sites at once, you can use Newstrawler (**www.newstrawler.com**). If you need specific technology research, you can select Toronto Computes, Canada Computes, The Computer Paper, ComputerWorld Canada, the GlobeTechnology site or ZDNet.

Finding out which Web sites allow archive searching can be a complex task. But Hermograph Press (**www.hermograph.com/njd/freemags.htm**) and JournalismNet (**www.journalismnet.com**), provide an extensive listing of sites from around the world.

Even though you may satisfy your search in the archives of the above sites, it also may be worthwhile to sign up for one or both of two innovative pay-to-use news archive services, Electric Library Canada and Encarta Online Library. Services such as these are useful because they put material from hundreds of publications in one massive data base, saving significant time in your research.

Electric Library Canada (**www.elibrary.ca**), offered by Rogers Media Inc., is available for a monthly fee of $12.95. Encarta (**www.iac-on-encarta.com**), costs $9.95 (U.S.) a month. Either service lets you search through past issues of several hundred publications, including newspapers, magazines, newsletters and other sources, without any additional charges.

My only complaint is that both services are limited in terms of Canadian news content. But the bonus is that you can sign up for a free 30-day trial with either service to discover their magic.

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